Message

From: US EPA New England Region [noreply-subscriptions@epa.gov]
Sent: 9/12/2018 4:14:51 PM
To: Dunn, Alexandra [dunn.alexandra@epa.gov]
Subject: New Hampshire Citizens and Organizations Recognized by EPA for Environmental Achievements

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
NEWS RELEASE
WWW.EPA.GOV/NEWSROOM

CONTACT:
David Deegan (News Media Only)
deegan.dave@epa.gov
(617) 918-1017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2018

New Hampshire Citizens and Organizations Recognized by EPA for Environmental Achievements

BOSTON – Two individuals and four organizations in New Hampshire were recognized today at the 2018 Environmental Merit Awards ceremony of the US Environmental Protection Agency's New England regional office. The environmental leaders were among 28 recipients across New England honored for their work to protect New England's environment.

Gary S. Lynn from the NH Department of Environmental Protection was recognized with a lifetime award for his many years of service to the health and environment of the state. James Houle from the University of New Hampshire was recognized with an annual award for his contribution and the University of New Hampshire Center for Freshwater Biology, the New Hampshire Chapter of the Nature Conservancy and the PFAS Coordination Team of the NH Department of Environmental Protection were all recognized for their work protecting the environment. Also at the merit ceremony, EPA New England announced three awards for leaders in Children's Health, with one award going to the City of Claremont and its Mayor, Charlene Lovett.

"New England is rich with individuals, businesses, and organizations that exhibit their strong commitment to local communities and to a clean and healthful environment. EPA is very proud to recognize these meaningful accomplishments," said EPA New England Regional Administrator Alexandra Dunn.

EPA New England each year recognizes individuals and groups in the six New England states whose are distinguished by their work to protect or improve the region's environment. The merit awards, given since 1970, honor individuals and groups who have shown ingenuity and commitment. The Environmental Merit Awards, given for work or actions done in the prior year, are awarded in the categories of individual; business (including professional organizations); local, state or federal government; and environmental, community, academia or nonprofit organization. Also, each year EPA presents lifetime achievement awards for individuals.

The 2018 Merit Award Winners from New Hampshire were:

Lifetime Achievement Awards

Gary S. Lynn
Educated in chemistry and chemical engineering, Lynn began his career in environmental consulting, where he honed his skills in solving environmental challenges. In the early 1990s, Lynn began his 25-year career at the NH Department of Environmental Services, working first in Superfund, guiding cleanup of the former Pease Air Force Base. In 1996, he became the state's first Brownfields Program coordinator, leveraging millions of dollars of private investment in cleanup and redevelopment of contaminated brownfields, and helping to revitalize communities. In 1999, Lynn took the helm of the Petroleum Remediation Section. In addition to leading hundreds of site cleanups, he led cutting-edge research into the role gasoline vapor releases played in contamination at underground storage tank sites, particularly regarding the gasoline additive, methyl tertiary-butyl ether, or MtBE. Realizing the state had a serious MtBE contamination problem, it filed suit against over 20 gasoline distributors and marketers in 2003. Over the next decade, Lynn was a key witness in the historic lawsuit. He brought an encyclopedic knowledge of the state's contaminated sites, the history of MtBE use, and the scope of the problem. He educated the state's attorneys and did countless research assignments. After all but one of the defendants settled, netting over $80 million in settlement funds, the state went to trial with one defendant. The three-month trial ended with a favorable jury verdict, netting $276 million that went to the New Hampshire Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund. In 2014, Lynn was hired as the first administrator of the MtBE Remediation Bureau, administering settlement funds. He assembled a staff to assess MtBE contamination, investigate sites, and expand public drinking water infrastructure and treatment systems. Since 2015, Lynn has led the efforts to build a program to administer the trust fund, which already has begun providing safe drinking water to communities. Lynn's achievements have left the people of New Hampshire with an enduring legacy of safe, clean drinking water.

Individuals

James Houle, University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center, Durham
The work and accomplishments of James Houle, program manager of the University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center, help provide clean and safe water to the region and nation. Houle works on the cutting edge of stormwater management and watershed restoration. His innovative work has led to green infrastructure technologies and policies to reduce stormwater pollution at local, state and national levels. Most recently, Houle deserves recognition for his work in furthering municipal approaches to stormwater management. He is adept at bridging the gap between day-to-day department of public works functions and the academic world of stormwater. He ably takes "the message to the streets" so towns understand that efficient green infrastructure does not have to be complicated or expensive. A highlight of Houle's accomplishments is the hands-on technical assistance he provides to states, federal agencies and municipalities to address stormwater impacts and restore watershed functions. His pragmatic approach is unique for a researcher. His ability to listen and provide thoughtful responses to DPW concerns has earned him deep respect from municipal stormwater managers. For example, during the Berry Brook Restoration Project in Dover, NH, Houle worked with DPW staff on 22 site-specific stormwater solutions that met budget and staffing demands as well as pollutant load reduction and restoration goals. Always willing to collaborate on stormwater projects, Houle is first to recognize others' efforts. Now it's time to recognize him.

Government

NH Department of Environmental Services, PFAS Coordination Team, Concord
LeaAnne Atwell, Karlee Kenison, Amy Doherty, Jennifer Marts, Brandon Kernen, Sarah Pillsbury, Tracy Wood, Catherine Beahm, Ed Peduto, Andrew Fulton, James Martin, KateEmma Schlosser, Clark Freise, Derek Bennett, Rick Skarinka, Gary Milbury, Keith Dubois, Ray Gordon, Robert Scott, Michael Wimsatt, Fred McGarry

The PFAS Coordination Team at the NH Department of Environmental Services has been responsible for one of the largest environmental efforts in state history, involving a level of community outreach that exceeds any prior efforts by DES. In 2016, DES was notified by Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics that drinking water in its Merrimack facility was contaminated with low levels of PFOA, a chemical used and emitted into the air by the facility since the 1980s. DES began sampling wells at homes and businesses in the area and found wells within a two-mile radius were possibly affected, including wells supplying the Merrimack Village District Water System. Bottled water was distributed and the state ordered that Saint-Gobain arrange for continuing a water supply. A smaller area was found then to be impacted by a former facility in Amherst, NH, operated by Textiles Coated International. A DES group, known as the PFAS Coordination Team, has met at least weekly to direct the agency response. Work has focused on making sure no one in New Hampshire is drinking water contaminated by PFAS. Its efforts, focused on the six towns impacted by the two plants, has extended to involve other facilities statewide. The team has worked to control air emissions from facilities, has supplied safe drinking water to more than 500 homes and has led to the cleanup of several sites.

Environmental, Community, Academia, Nonprofit

The Nature Conservancy – New Hampshire Chapter, Concord
The Nature Conservancy brings people and groups together to help protect the environment. It promotes clean energy and works with communities to develop neighborhood visions of environmental solutions best for residents. The Conservancy works to connect the region's river and stream networks by identifying and helping to replace culverts, and removing dams and other infrastructure that impair water flow and restrict aquatic species movement. The New Hampshire Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and its partners recently completed a new tool to evaluate the condition of tidal crossings around seacoast New Hampshire. While some tidal crossings allow tides to move in and out, others are undersized, obstructed or falling apart. The protocol will standardize how these crossings are assessed and help set priorities for improvements. The Nature Conservancy scientists also are working to restore natural habitats such as salt marsh, oyster reefs and floodplain forests as natural infrastructure solutions to make our communities more resilient, as well as working to reduce nitrogen pollution into waterways through effective partnerships and innovative strategies.

University of New Hampshire Center for Freshwater Biology, Durham
Jim Haney, Alan Baker, Jeffrey Schloss, Robert Craycraft, Shane Bradt, Amanda Murby McQuaid, Anne Ewert, Katharine Langely, Nancy Leland, Jonathon Dufresne, Sabina Perkins, Sonya Carlson

The University of New Hampshire Center for Freshwater Biology has worked with EPA New England and other entities across the region to address cyanobacteria issues. The UNH Center has been instrumental in ongoing research, and developing tools for understanding the global proliferation of harmful cyanobacteria blooms and educating the public on its impacts. The UNH Center worked with state and local entities to develop a scientific approach to monitoring and tracking cyanobacteria blooms. Their research, as well as their educational and monitoring efforts, resulted in participation from 28 of the 50 state environmental agencies and often participation across state and national boundaries. The program has educated hundreds of people and local associations nationwide, building public participation in monitoring. All six New England environmental agencies have participated, and municipal water suppliers have incorporated the program's techniques into standard practices. The UNH Center has pioneered innovative approaches to monitoring cyanobacteria and engaging the public. They have been at the forefront with cutting edge research on cyanotoxins. In addition, they have developed many tools now used by EPA and states for tracking bloom formation and cyanobacteria development in freshwater. Not only has the team helped advance the science behind cyanobacteria blooms and toxin occurrence, but they have dedicated time and energy to working collaboratively for improvements in clean water.

Children's Health

City of Claremont
It is no coincidence that in February Governor Chris Sununu chose Claremont as the location to sign into law new protections against childhood lead exposure, with Mayor Charlene Lovett by his side. The new legislation mandates lead screenings for all 1- and 2-year-olds in the state and lowers the blood-lead level that triggers state intervention.

For decades, Claremont has been one of New Hampshire's highest risk communities for lead poisoning, with an average of 40 children poisoned yearly. Meanwhile, testing rates for blood lead levels in 1- and 2-year-olds there have been among the lowest in the state, even though state health officials recommend universal lead screening for kids due to old housing stock. Lead paint in homes is the single largest contributor to elevated blood lead levels in New Hampshire. Fortunately, the City of Claremont has a champion in Mayor Charlene Lovett. Faced with this alarming data, Mayor Lovett made lead poisoning prevention and awareness a priority. She spearheaded a collaborative effort involving healthcare professionals, the school superintendent, and local building, code, and health officials, to increase public awareness and testing rates, and reduce lead hazards in housing. This year for the first time the Claremont school district is requiring lead screening for all students entering kindergarten and pre-kindergarten, the first policy of its kind in the state. The ultimate goal is to prevent poisonings from happening in the first place. Because protecting a child's health is so critically important, we celebrate strong voices like those from Mayor Lovett and her partners in Claremont.

In addition to the winners from New Hampshire, Nancy Seidman of Cambridge, Mass., was given the Ira Leighton "In Service to States" annual award for environmental achievement that has had an outsized impact in the state, the region, and nationally.

More information on EPA's Environmental Merit Awards, including photographs from the award ceremony: https://www.epa.gov/environmental-merit-awards-new-england

# # #